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WESTERN CANADA

THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY



An Address by R. D. Waugh, Esq., City Controller of Winnipeg, Man., before the Third Annual Convention of the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges at Minneapolis, June 15, 16 and 17, 1910

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~~THE GREAT NORTH-WEST~~ DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT NORTH-WEST TERRITORY

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Mr. President and Gentlemen:

Before proceeding to the subject entrusted to me, I desire to express to yourself and the members of the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges my thanks for your very cordial invitation to be present at this convention.

I fully appreciate the compliment of an opportunity to speak to you, especially on the subject of the development of the North-west. We want you to become better acquainted with Canadians and Canada, as we also desire to get into closer touch with you. You want our land and our unequalled opportunities. We want your people and your capital to assist us in building up in our part of this continent as great a commonwealth as you, our friendly neighbors, have reared to the south of us.

Annexation, as far as we in Canada are concerned, is, and has been, a pipe-dream, but there is, and will continue to be, an increasing desire for closer trade and social relations between the United States and Canada, and I know, sir, that meetings such

as this do much to remove any international bashfulness that may exist.

The Winnipeg Real Estate Exchange welcomed with great pleasure the suggestion to join the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges, and I believe that our association will result in great benefit, not only to ourselves as individuals, but will be the means to a still greater extent of bringing together for mutual welfare the two great nations to which we respectively belong.

Although I have frequently spoken on the subject of the past and future of Western Canada, I have not previously fully realized the romantic or potential significance of the subject, nor, I admit, have I fully considered the extent of it. The chief difficulty is to cover the ground without entering into wearisome detail.

Traced from the beginning to the present time, the varied courses of human enterprise which have each in turn done their part in laying a solid foundation in Western Canada, are of thrilling interest.

It is not generally known that in 1866 a bill was introduced into the United States Congress to make provision for the admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East and Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan and Columbia.

The bill provided for payment to the Hudson Bay Company of ten millions of dollars in full of all claims to territory or jurisdiction in North America.

This wholesale real estate deal fell through, and the territorial rights of the Hudson's Bay Company were four years later transferred to the Canadian government.

The Hudson's Bay Company's long successful and beneficial rule covering a period of two centuries, from 1670 to 1870, during

which it was the supreme authority in what is now known as Western Canada, is in itself an historical romance, the facts of which could scarcely be surpassed by the imagination.

The story of the first white settlers on the banks of the Red River, brought thither by Lord Selkirk, in 1812, from Scotland, by way of Hudson Bay, is a record of hardship, devotion and determination which will be cherished for all time in the history of Canada.

The story of early transportation is of international interest, but more especially to the cities of St. Paul and Winnipeg, or Fort Garry, as it was then called, for the nearest point of communication with the outside world was reached at St. Paul (Minneapolis was not in existence then), where the settlers from Fort Garry brought their furs and other products, sold them and returned north laden with goods sent from the old country and elsewhere.

The Red River cart, made without nail or metal of any description, was a suitable vehicle for this pioneer traffic.

The settlers came to St. Paul and returned in brigades for better protection against hostile Indians, with whom many exciting and sometimes literally hair-raising skirmishes are recorded.

Your own James J. Hill was comparatively speaking, as closely in touch with the north-western traffic at that time as he is yet, he being a clerk on the levee and well known to all western old-timers.

On our own side of the line we have also a distinguished relic of early freighting days in the person of the Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, who then earned a living and a reputation driving a mule team from Winnipeg to Edmonton.

This method of transportation was superseded as the railway pushed northward from

St. Paul by a line of steamboats plying on the Red River. The story of the voyageur and the missionary, who were amongst the first to face the unknown dangers of a vast wilderness, and the record of that admirable force, the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, whose duty it was to maintain, and who did maintain, law and order in a territory twice as large as Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana, is filled with incidents of suffering, heroism and self-denial.

All of these, the elements which have contributed in large measure to the development of Western Canada, are in themselves of sufficient interest to the historian or author, but it is not my intention to deal at any greater length with ancient history, but to get down to what we know has been the actual period of expansion.

I will endeavor as briefly as possible to give you some idea of the past ten years' growth in that portion of Canada extending from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains, and from the International boundary to the Saskatchewan river.

Immigration to Canada from the United States up to say fifteen years ago was merely the ordinary moving of population natural to neighboring countries, and the United States had the best of it.

You had at that time large areas of unoccupied land, and could take care of your moving population and also a large portion of ours. It was almost impossible to coax the homeseekers across the border.

With the year 1900, when the American invasion struck Western Canada, a new condition prevailed.

The Federal Government of Canada, realizing that no matter how fertile land may be, it is useless if not productive, and that we must have people to use it, has been making special efforts during the past decade

to bring to the knowledge of homeseekers the opportunities awaiting them in Western Canada.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, our pioneer road, and the Canadian Northern Railway, both of which received large grants of land from the government as aid in their construction, were of course vitally interested in the country's growth. But I am stating what is, I think, a generally admitted fact when I say that the shrewd, optimistic, persistent real estate agent and his invitation to the investor and homeseeker to "come and see" has, in co-operation with the railways and the government, been the most efficient agency in the actual transfer of men and money from your side of the line to ours.

In 1900 the immigration to Canada from the United States totalled 18,000; in 1909 it increased to 104,000, and in the same year we got 93,000 from Great Britain. The United States, on the other hand, during the same period, got 110,000 immigrants from Great Britain, to say nothing of what you got from Canada. So far as we are concerned on this side of the Atlantic we should be satisfied with this outcome of international exchange.

In the past fifty years three and a quarter millions of Canadians have come to the United States, and if our immigration from you be at the rate of say 300,000 a year for ten years, you will only be giving us back what you have taken from us.

We loaned you men like James J. Hill to build up your great nation in the nineteenth century; now it is our turn, and it is up to you to be neighbourly and let us have some of our people back to build up our great Dominion in the twentieth century. Our population now is just about equal to the population of Pennsylvania. During the last Christmas holidays over fifty thous-

and excursionists left Western Canada for the United States. Eastern Canada and Great Britain are each one a booster for Western Canada. They told the folks back home about their success—you know what that means.

There is, furthermore, a continuous and ever increasing network of cords stretching from old homes in every state of the Union to new homes in Western Canada. Here is the father making a new home for his growing boys. Here is the young man building in the "Last West" a home for the girl he left behind him, and so it goes.

These are amongst the powerful and ever widening influences which are working for our development.

Until the year 1880 there was not a foot of railway between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains. The first equipment used by the Canadian Pacific Railway in the west, consisting of a locomotive, caboose and six flat cars, was taken by steamboat and barge down the Red River from Moorhead, Minnesota. In older countries railways have been built to supply transportation for existing communities where traffic awaits the rails. The railways of the west, especially the Canadian Pacific, have preceded the settler and opened the field, bringing in the pioneer and carrying out his produce. They have turned a wilderness into splendid farms, and have created wealth in land values from nothing to an amount almost impossible of estimation. At the present time the Canadian Pacific railway company has in round figures 6,000 miles of railway tracks west of Winnipeg, the main line being double tracked east from Winnipeg to Fort William.

The Canadian Northern Railway is owned by two men, Wm. Mackenzie and D. D. Mann, and enjoys the remarkable record of having

built a mile a day for every day of the past twelve years.

With the new National Transcontinental Railway now under construction and in operation between Winnipeg and Edmonton, and the lines of the Great Northern, the west will have over 12,000 miles of operated railway before the close of 1910.

The government of Canada is pledged to the construction of, and work has begun on a railway to Hudson Bay, which will afford an additional, cheaper and shorter route to and from the markets of the old world for the produce and imports of Western Canada and the northwestern and western states. Residents of the Twin Cities will go to Europe via Hudson Bay, sailing from Moorhead down the Red River to Winnipeg, thence to the head of Lake Winnipeg (where another Duluth will no doubt arise), thence by rail to Fort Churchill or Nelson, and thence to Liverpool by present routes, but I am inclined to think it will take a longer time to make it.

A line of railway will also be built immediately by the Alberta Government to open up its great and wonderfully rich northern territory.

When it is considered, however, that the great plain dividing Winnipeg from the Rocky Mountains is one thousand miles long and more than half that distance in width, it can be readily understood what a gigantic task the transportation companies have before them to keep pace with the demands of their service.

The enormous present and potential wealth of Western Canada and the stability of its resources are attractive to the settler and capitalist alike.

In 1909, 170,000 farmers in Western Canada divided \$370,000,000 as the result of their year's operations. \$200,000,000 (more than twice the combined capital of all the banks

in Canada), was the value of the cereal crop alone. In the year 1908 the cereal crop sold for \$146,000,000, or a total of \$346,000,000, produced in two years by the cultivation of 12,000,000 acres. In the province of Saskatchewan alone the wheat production increased from 27,000,000 bushels in 1907 to 90,000,000 bushels in 1909, a period of three years.

There are still many millions of acres of land free and for sale just as good as the lands upon which the crops of the past have been raised. The three provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta contain 350,000,000 acres of land, of which 150,000,000 acres is almost entirely unexplored. The total area of surveyed land, all agricultural, is 145,000,000 acres. We have surveyed ready to give away 208,640 homesteads of 160 acres each, an area as large as the State of Illinois.

It is generally supposed that Manitoba is pretty well settled up, but there are still open for free homestead 1,500,000 acres of land in that province.

The great Peace River country is as yet practically unknown.

The late United States Consul Taylor, whose memory is revered in the west and whose picture, the gift of the citizens, adorns the city hall of Winnipeg, predicted in 1876 that wheat would be grown on the Saskatchewan River. This prediction seemed at that time as impossible of verification as prospective wheat growing at the North Pole is today, yet the consul lived to prove it, and sent in 1881 to the state department at Washington a sample of wheat grown at Battleford. His able successor, Consul-General John E. Jones, is equally impressed with the possibilities of the great fertile northland.

Evidence given before the special committee of the senate during the session of

1907 by Mr. W. F. Bredin, member of the local legislature of North Alberta, who resides at Lesser Slave Lake, and others, proves that this country possesses marvellous natural resources in agricultural lands, immense navigable waterways, great forests and mineral wealth in the shape of gold, coal, iron, petroleum, asphaltum, etc., etc.

Mr. Bredin in the course of his evidence stated that he had been ten years in Northern Alberta and from this experience he considers Northern Alberta as good a place for man to settle in as the Saskatchewan Valley was twenty-five years ago. He estimated that the agricultural land north of Edmonton in Alberta was greater in extent than the good land south of the Capital. There are small settlements at Lesser Slave Lake, Great Slave Lake, along the Peace River Valley, at Spirit River, Grand Prairie, Wolverine Point and Vermillion. These are all more or less agricultural settlements and steadily developing, although the land is unsurveyed and settlers are squatters.

At Fort Vermillion, 700 miles north of the boundary, in latitude 58.30, almost as far north as the northern part of Labrador, wheat has been regularly raised, 22,000 bushels having been ground in the local grist mill.

It is well known that wheat grown in Fort Vermillion took first prize at the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893.

Owing to the long duration of sunlight each day in the summer and to the strength of the sun, crops mature very rapidly. The settlers occasionally commence seeding about the second week in April, but the average time in that country is from the 26th of April to the 4th or 5th of May. The ripe grain is usually harvested from the beginning to the middle of August.

One witness who had farmed in the Peace River Valley for over twenty years swore

that he had never had a failure of wheat during that time. The yield of wheat has been as high as 66 bushels to the acre without new fertilizing.

If a settler wants irrigated lands he will find 3,000,000 acres on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway east of Calgary. Water will be applied to over a million acres through four thousand miles of main and secondary canals.

It is an interesting fact that in order to carry out this great work, the largest on the continent, 46,000,000 yards of earth will be displaced, one fourth as much as the Panama Canal. The cost per acre of water rental is fifty cents per year.

This land, of which a large portion has been sold and is now under cultivation, produces alfalfa and the fodder crops, sugar beets and all high-grade crops grown on a farm where dairying, poultry-raising and stock-feeding are practiced.

Lethbridge, Alberta, is also the headquarters of a large irrigation company which has constructed about 300 miles of ditch.

The opening up of new territory by railway extension means the foundation of hundreds of new towns.

The Winnipeg Free Press recently compiled a group of statistics dealing with the growth of cities in Western Canada, and it is found that in three years in twelve of these cities there has been expended \$50,000,000 in buildings. In 1901 the whole of the vast territory from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains contained but two cities with a population of 5,000 or over. Since that time many cities have sprung into being, and today they are busy commercial centres with imposing buildings, modern pavements, municipally owned and successful utilities, such as street car services, electric light, power and water plants. Their populations have grown with remarkable rapidity, a re-

sult that could not be otherwise in view of the rapid settlement of the land in a decade, during which the attention of the world has been directed as never before to the wonderful fertility of Western Canadian prairies. These new cities are starting out with the advantage of having for their guidance the experience of centuries of city building, and from this day they are only taking for their example that which is best and suited to the country.

In 11 of the cities referred to there are 640 miles of sidewalks, 345 miles of water mains. The ratable value in the twelve cities varied from 162 to 1,1,378 per cent. in six years.

In the past eight years, while Winnipeg has been growing from 42,340 to 140,000, Brandon has grown from 5,620 to 13,000; Calgary from 4,091 to 30,000; Regina from 2,249 to 13,500; Edmonton from 2,626 to 28,000; Moose Jaw from 1,558 to 12,000; Portage la Prairie from 3,901 to 7,000; Lethbridge from 2,072 to 10,000; Medicine Hat from 1,570 to 5,000; Prince Albert from 1,785 to 7,000, and Saskatoon from 113 to 12,100. The same proportionate increase applies to the smaller towns.

Splendid opportunities await in these centres for practically all the trades or professions necessary to human comfort.

Religion and education are well provided for; there is no established religion, and every person is at liberty to worship as he pleases. Common education is free. Manitoba has its university, and Alberta and Saskatchewan are taking advanced steps in this direction. Agricultural colleges and experimental farms have been established at various points.

In conclusion: If I were asked "What is the great inducement for the homeseeker who goes to Canada?" I would answer: "Opportunity." The government offers free

160 acres of land. The settler can select it himself, and he has the privilege of purchasing in certain districts 160 acres in addition at \$3.00 per acre. You cannot run against a snap like that in any other country. The farmer in older places finds it good business to sell for \$100 or more an acre land on which he has been raising from twelve to fourteen bushels of wheat to the acre, put his money in his pocket and go west where he can get land for the asking which in even an ordinary year, will raise double the crop.

The level-headed, experienced farmer from the United States knows a good thing when he sees it, and it will take more than a boundary line to keep him from getting his share. There is no sentiment, either with him or with us; it is a business proposition which appeals to him, which means increased and increasing wealth and comfort to him and his family. He finds a welcome and institutions as free as he had them here. Hardships, if he knows any, are peculiar to his individual circumstances. For a country only partially developed it is orderly, and life and property are as safe in any part of the west and northwest as they would be in Minneapolis.

It is a region of actual and great potential wealth. Its possibilities and opportunities are attractive to all classes of workers—we don't want loafers. Improved social conditions are keeping abreast of industrial progress, and in a great majority of cases the farmer from the United States has brought his own social conditions with him. Whole districts in Canada are settled with families who lived in the same neighborhood here.

We invite you, as real estate men, to come and see us, and if we can't do you good we will give you a Western Canadian welcome, anyway.

Look out for our great exposition at Winnipeg in 1914, and visit us; there's money in it.

We have as yet made only a small and comparatively insignificant beginning. We have only cultivated a garden patch in the vast tillable area of Western Canada.

Mr. Edwin L. Higgins of New York said: "It is the story of an opportunity, the last of its kind on the American continent, if not in the world; an opportunity so exceptional that it would be almost a crime not to spread the knowledge of it broadcast throughout the land."

Mr. President and Gentlemen, I again thank you and your Minneapolis friends for your courtesy and kindness to the Winnipeg delegation, and I thank the gentlemen present for their patient hearing and consideration. (Prolonged applause.)

WESTERN CANADA

MANITOBA, SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA

	Land Acres
Manitoba	41,169,098
Saskatchewan	155,092,480
Alberta	160,755,200

Only 8 per cent. of arable land under cultivation

GRAIN ACREAGE, 1910

	Acres
Wheat	8,453,200
Oats	4,225,800
Barley	1,022,000
Flax	630,000

HOMESTEAD ENTRIES

1907	28,647
1908	30,424
1900	39,081
1910 (5 months)	23,354
1910 - increase over same period in 1909 is 78 per cent.	

RAILWAY MILEAGE

	Miles
1900	3,680
1908	9,365
1909	11,472

Further Information by applying to

CHAS. F. ROLAND, COMMISSIONER

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